

General Topics :: Our approach to Bible study and interpretation**Our approach to Bible study and interpretation - posted by DEADn (), on: 2014/10/23 9:30**

Have you ever wondered about yourself under the banner of the title? The majority of people attend their churches usually out of tradition. They grew up there or it was a place to go that they liked or were invited and what was said just made sense.

When it comes to bible study they listen to their pastor and when they study on their own they usually do so under the influence of the teaching they just heard so when they interpret scripture it is based around that rather than having no bias at all and allowing scripture to interpret scripture. Does this make any sense?

I had the hardest time with this myself in realizing that I wasn't always coming to the Bible without a denomination bias of reading. Not an easy thing to shake.

Have any of you recognized this in the church? In you? How did you deal with it after you recognized it?

I happened to come across a podcast which is actually teaching me to come to the word without bias and keep the scripture in context without injecting my own thoughts into what it is really saying. It is actually helping me to prove or disprove things by using scripture and not just a few words out of the bible. By knowing scripture but also by analyzing preachers when they are correctly interpreting something and when they are seducing the scripture.

Re: Our approach to Bible study and interpretation - posted by Sidewalk (), on: 2014/10/23 11:49

Dead on, DEADn!

One of the greatest and most humbling revelations I ever heard from the Holy Spirit was that my Theology was leading my heart and mind while the Scripture trailed along behind, looking for slots to fill in! How stupid of me, and even worse how many years it took to finally hear it!

And how scary it is to my flesh to think that the Scriptures are right, true, and much wiser than I am!

I listen differently now, with a glimmer of understanding when it says His ways are higher than ours. And psalm 73 is profoundly electric!

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2014/10/23 12:10

Sidewalk

Thank you for the acknowledgement on this. I am thankful to know someone is in agreement with this. My personality and way of ministry has been way ahead of my study in this arena. For me often am praised because of my patience, listening ear and asking questions to probe the heart of others yet I often find myself searching for answers to combat false doctrines, teaching, thinking, etc. and have often found myself at a loss in some situation when trying to teach someone an error because emotions get too much in the way or scripture twisting was on the forefront without realizing it.

This has really caused me to go to scripture more and look at context and ask what is being said vs. just taking a verse and making it fit my life just because. It is too easy to do that and in such we deceive ourselves in the process. It may be a reason why so many denominations exist.

Re: Our approach to Bible study and interpretation - posted by Martyr (), on: 2014/10/23 13:54

Deadn, if you don't mind me asking, what podcast are you listening to? I have been sharing this same conviction for a while now and have been looking for a good teaching on the subject.

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2014/10/23 14:52

www.fightingforthefaith.com

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2014/10/23 16:35

John, this a very good point you raise here.

I think many (if not most) of us have been conditioned to some extent or another by the particular group we associate with to view bible doctrines through the glasses that were prescribed to us when growing in our faith.

This was certainly true for me, but as I exposed myself to teaching and fellowship from a wider range outside of my normal group you find the things you took as certain, now challenged. This in turn caused me to re-look at what I believed on certain subjects to see what was solid truth or not. This is one of the great benefits of Sermon Index sermons, in that you can find a whole spectrum of different positions on certain issues, but from people who uphold the authority of scripture.

One of the main ways I found (and continue to find) really helpful is reading through the bible book by book, chapter by chapter at a pace that enables you to understand what is being said. This has many times highlighted where scriptures have been taken out of context to support a doctrine and you can see the true context and meaning. It also gives you a good solid overview of the revelation of God to us and are less likely to be deceived into highlighting one particular passage on it's own to push a teaching.

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2014/10/23 16:49

HeyDave

Thanks for the input.

I was raised in the Lutheran Church til 3rd gradish. Mom quit the church because of church politics. I was saved when I was 20 and I went back to that church and then left because it was lifeless to me. I found myself in an Assemblies of God church. That is like equator vs. north/south pole in doctrine and I learned things there I never knew.

When I came to sermonindex I came from the discussion board. I listen to occasional sermons but it is the discussion board that I am focused on more for it provides me a bit of fellowship online.

Re: Our approach to Bible study and interpretation - posted by crusader (), on: 2014/10/23 18:04

Hi Deadn

When i first became a christian a friend whos mother had died gave me all of her teaching tapes that she had collected over many years. Back then i worked as a security officer in a warehouse and i was able to listen to about 350 tapes of sermons. these helped me to grow in understanding, by the end of these tapes i started yearning for understanding the bible myself as some of the tapes contradicted each other and i wanted to see who was right. A pastor of my church told me his method of studying the bible and for about 3 years i studied this way. i eventually met a father of the faith and when we sat down and we discussed subjects in the bible i found to my horror that my study method was completely flawed. The man took me under his wing for 3yrs Showing me how the christians from the old days use to interpret scripture.

This was painful process because God started to break down all of my foundations that i had built and for the first time i started to see truth compared to a lie (it wasn't a nice process to realise i was flawed in many conclusions). the man that taught me said to me that i needed to learn how to read the bible for my self and to test every doctrine that i hear against the word so that i didn't just believe everyone (including himself)with out seeing this in the bible.

since this time i am able to check when my understanding is in the flesh or spirit and can see clearly truth and lies. I found that it can lead to the deepest spiritual study that sometimes has taken me years for my carnal mind to comprehend the spiritual principle. For me personally it was very freeing to be able to walk through the word with Jesus and have exploration

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s of insight on different subjects.

One book that i have found to be very solid in teaching on how to read the bible is A.W.Pinks interpretation of scripture. if i find i have come to a dead end in my study or things don't make sense this book has always shown me where i might have taken a wrong turn in my study and has allowed me to get back on track. :)

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2014/10/23 18:33

crusader

Great input! I often do not believe I have a good understanding of studying scripture although I think this podcast I am listening to is sharpening that end of it. It is a process and in that I am also crossing paths with people who challenge the bible even being truth. I would think that these studies will help clarify those challenges and answer them regardless of whether that person wants to accept that answer or not.

I am taking note of that book you mentioned and will look for it. It may serve me well as it is doing for you.

Re: - posted by crusader (), on: 2014/10/24 1:24

Hi deadn

yeah it is a great tool for studying it carries every major aspect of interpreting the bible correctly. i must admit that i found it hard to read to start with as i wasnt very educated at the time and A.W.Pink doesnt write in basic language. I had to pray alot for God to allow my mind to comprehend some of the principles.

i have found sometimes as well that when i come to a dead end on a study that i can find a sermon that can open the path again for my search but i only look for these after i have exhausted my search through scripture as i don't want to influence my study. :) for example i have been writing a program for about 7 years now on addiction and there was point that i couldnt go any further until i heard too different sermons on different subjects. as they brought revelations into other sins it opened the path for me to bring other scriptures into it which made it flow biblically and the principle became sound biblically. :)

Re: Our approach to Bible study and interpretation - posted by Sree (), on: 2014/10/24 4:09

Quote:

When it comes to bible study they listen to their pastor and when they study on their own they usually do so under the influence of the teaching they just heard so when they interpret scripture it is based around that rather than having no bias at all and allowing scripture to interpret scripture. Does this make any sense?

I had the hardest time with this myself in realizing that I wasn't always coming to the Bible without a denomination bias of reading. Not an easy thing to shake.

Wonderful observation. I had the hard time myself with it. When I first came to Christ 6 years back, I had no understanding of Bible as I had never read it before. I used to heavily rely on Brother Zac Poonen's teachings. I used his Bible Study messages to try and interpret the Bible the way he does. The way he carefully examined each and every verse gave so much insight to me on how I should read the Bible.

But once I was Baptised by the Holy Spirit, I started getting revelation directly from scripture. I stopped using his Bible Study messages. I still hear his messages though. Zac himself says that we should give importance to first hand revelation that we get from Holy Spirit rather than 2nd hand revelation that we get from hearing a preacher.

An elder in my Church once advised me to compare my revelations with Zac by hearing his Bible Study in Parallel to make sure it is inline with his views. I did not agree with him but did not want to argue either, but he was soon corrected by another elder. So I agree there is a great danger of people restricting their Bible interpretation to what they hear from their pastor. A good Bible Teacher should introduce his sheep to hear the voice of chief Shepherd Jesus Christ. I am sure there are very few such Bible teachers in our time.

It is a great thing if we start hearing the voice of Holy Spirit to receive revelations from him directly.

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2014/10/24 8:17

Quote:

An elder in my Church once advised me to compare my revelations with Zac by hearing his Bible Study in Parallel to make sure it is inline with his views. I did not agree with him but did not want to argue either, but he was soon corrected by another elder. So I agree there is a great danger of people restricting their Bible interpretation to what they hear from their pastor. A good Bible Teacher should introduce his sheep to hear the voice of chief Shepherd Jesus Christ. I am sure there are very few such Bible teachers in our time.

I believe one thing we should do is also to make sure that what we believe that what the Holy Spirit reveals to us is in line with scripture and that can mean sharing it with others as a confirmation so we know hear correctly

2 Peter 1:20

20But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation,

This says prophecy but can it also mean basic scripture? After all, a great many cults have sprung up as a result of some leader having secret revelation and didn't like it when others said it was not of God so they went on their own tangent

btw, something I am beginning to do more and more is when I make a point in reference to scripture I intend to use scripture to demonstrate what I refer to. It is like giving documentation. This way I sow seeds as well as establish myself in the Word while not solely giving my own opinion. After all, these are spiritual matters of which I am ignorant of except for bible knowledge.

Re: - posted by Sidewalk (), on: 2014/10/24 11:31

It's fun giving our opinions on how to work with the opinions of others...!

I was interested in the Jewish custom of the Bar Mitzvah, how at age 13 a boy departs his childhood and becomes a man. The implication here is that at age 13 he is old enough to be able to understand the truth and be accountable to it. He, in moral matters and in regard to God is a responsible adult. (Good grief, when I think of what I was like at 13!)

But further, there seems to be another implication that good and true doctrine should make sense to this young man. Doctrinal concepts beyond his basic thinking would be non-essential, and he would not be under obligation to them in the same way he would to essential doctrines.

I am thus skeptical of doctrine built on individual proof-texting, and more comfortable with doctrine that has multiple clear references from the Scripture. My inner 13 year old needs moral clarity.

Sometimes it is amazing to see children show an easy understanding of how sin and morality work against each other. It is also alarming to see some of them display a love for sin.

And who was it that said, "Unless you become as little children..."?

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2014/10/25 8:46

From initial post...

"It is actually helping me to prove or disprove things by using scripture and not just a few words out of the bible. By knowing scripture but also by analyzing preachers when they are correctly interpreting something and when they are seducing the scripture."

As one subjects oneself to the Scriptures and allows the Scriptures to comment on the Scriptures, one will recognize why men choose to ignore what the Word of God is trying to impart to the individual. Those who fear that one will lose fellowship with those who seek to maintain the traditions of men, will always choose to "seduce the scriptures."

However, those who choose the ancient path, who seek to grow in understanding, will find a banquet placed before them. They will be trained to distinguish between light and darkness.

Jesus always asked questions. And that forces the individual to choose between Him or the traditions of men. Look to the example below...

Luk 20:1

Now it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, that the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted Him

Luk 20:2

and spoke to Him, saying, "Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?"

Luk 20:3

But He answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, and answer Me:

Luk 20:4

"The baptism of John was it from heaven or from men?"

Luk 20:5

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?'"

Luk 20:6

"But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet."

Luk 20:7

So they answered that they did not know where it was from.

Luk 20:8

And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Will you allow the Word of God to show you the intents of your own heart and repent for what is not righteous, or will you choose the traditions of men which have no power to save? Those who choose the traditions of men will grow to dislike those who answer to the Word of God.

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2014/10/25 15:15

Quote:

Will you allow the Word of God to show you the intents of your own heart and repent for what is not righteous, or will you choose the traditions of men which have no power to save? Those who choose the traditions of men will grow to dislike those who answer to the Word of God.

This is a scary quote because no doubt I am going to find myself at a crossroads with something that I didn't think about before and find that I am wrong and it possibly shake me up inside. I already have part of this happening to me on a subject that is taboo on this site. Something I would rather discuss via email rather than this site as a result.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2014/10/26 0:31

Good and needful topic here I think. I'll try to be brief in sharing my experience regarding this subject. When I first came to Christ I immediately had a hunger to read the Word on my own without any helps, so I began doing that. At the same time, I began learning essential doctrine from certain kinds of study helps such as sermons, a study Bible and other books. In those early days I was introduced to both the Oneness view of the Godhead and the Trinity and was confused at first, not knowing for sure which view was correct. After seriously praying about it and comparing both views with Scripture the Trinity seemed much more clearly taught than the Oneness view. I think that certain study helps which pointed out the specific relevant scriptures helped me in deciding which view was correct. I think that if I had not had those study aids it may have taken longer for me to decide on that doctrine as it may have taken me longer to find those relevant scriptures just from reading the Word on my own. So I believe one very important use for the gift of teaching in the Church is to help us learn essential truth as quickly as possible and to help us get grounded in those truths. That is not to say we absolutely need someone (other than the Holy Spirit and the Word) to teach us essential doctrine; but simply to say many times the Lord uses the gift of teaching to help teach us those truths quicker.

While learning the essentials I was also introduced to different non-essential doctrines such as on the gifts of the Spirit, Calvinism vs. Arminianism, end-times, etc. When it came to those kinds of doctrines, at first I accepted certain views sort of unreservedly due to being influenced by certain writings of certain preachers which leaned toward those views. But then I was introduced to other views which challenged my views and I found myself having to prayerfully search the Scriptures more and I ended up changing some of my views on account of that. So even when it came to non-essential doctrines I found it helpful to see what the different views were and what scriptures were used to support each particular view. I tried to prayerfully compare each view with Scripture and to arrive at the most biblical view myself.

So while I agree that we need to be careful not to rely too heavily on someone else's interpretations of Scripture, I also see the ministry of teaching clearly taught in the Word as being very important. The Lord uses the gift of teaching in His Church to help instruct us in both essential and non-essential doctrine.

I'm reminded of a biblical principle taught in the example of the Bereans as seen in Acts 17:10-12. We're told there that upon hearing Paul for the first time the Bereans "received the word with all readiness". That shows they had a teachable spirit. But also it goes on to say that they "searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so." They didn't just blindly accept even the apostle Paul's teaching. So the principle is that first of all, we must have a teachable spirit. We must humbly acknowledge and accept the fact that God has supplied His Church with gifted teachers to help us grow in our understanding of His Word. But at the same time we must search the Scriptures for ourselves and be ready to test every teaching we hear to see if it lines up with the Word. If it clearly lines up with the Word we must humbly and gladly receive it as coming from God Himself. And if on the other hand we find it doesn't line up with the Word we must be quick to chuck that teaching into the nearest trash can and move on.

Re: - posted by dfella (), on: 2014/10/26 10:10

Brothers!!

This is a most excellent topic and by Gods grace led of the Holy Spirit.

I have some thoughts and experiences I would like to share as Brother John requested however I am off to church.

I bear witness with everyone's input, thoughts, and experiences and I am putting myself on the line so I will follow through by sharing what my experiences have been as related to this very subject.

So I will return, Lord willing.

One statement I would like to make on this thread is that even though John put the topic out there it is God who inspired him to do so.

It is a topic that needs to be discussed as for me I am greatly inspired and my spirit is up lifted by such meaningful sharing with one another in UNITY!!!!

So in Jesus name, the train will not get derailed before I return. Just being honest brothers for I long to partake of discussions where the Holy Spirit is leading us together being of one mind, one heart, and one accord.

This is such a great Upper Room discussion, PTL.

Blessings,
Brother Dave